

Metropolitan hubs and cross-border issues

The process of metropolization transcends national borders. The growing flows of cross-border workers are marking out new services and employment areas, and it is important to establish governance for these large territories. French organizations have seen the "Pôle métropolitain" ("metropolitan hub") as a new tool for structuring their partnerships. The Réseau des Pôles Métropolitains (metropolitan hubs network), the MOT, DATAR and the FNAU¹ held a seminar on this topic on 19 March. Hosted by Metz Métropole, it was attended by a hundred participants, many representing French hubs in cross-border locations, others from Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland and DG REGIO. It was an opportunity to illustrate cross-border metropolitan issues, based for example on the experience of the

Sillon lorrain² and the Greater Region: scales of cooperation (city networks, metropolitan regions, etc.); cooperation topics (culture, higher education, etc.); governance tools. State representatives were able to present their support policies — in particular Germany, with the MORO pilot projects and the IMEG network of cross-border metropolitan regions — and consider synergies on the common borders, backed by the 2014-2020 cohesion policy (strategic approach upstream of programming; integrated territorial development tools; knowledge and networking tools).

Further information on the metropolitan hubs website

¹ National Federation of the Public Urban Planning Agencies

² Lorraine Corridor



Cross-border work in the Greater Region

Salariat et transformations sociales
Le travail frontalier
au sein de la Grande Région Saar-Lor-Lux
Pratiques, enjeux et perspectives



sous la direction de
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PUN - ÉDITIONS UNIVERSITAIRES DE LORRAINE

A new book on cross-border work in the Greater Region has been published recently by Editions Universitaires de Lorraine*. Drawing up an assessment of knowledge on the practices, the issues and the prospects for development of cross-border work, it brings together twenty-five contributions by geographers, historians, sociologists and economists. Olivier Denert, MOT secretary-general, has contributed an article on cross-border worker flows in France and in Europe.

The Saar-Lor-Lux-Wallonia cross-border area (also known as the Greater Region) is at the heart of the analyses of

this collection, along with cross-border worker practices with regard to travel and expenditure, and their socio-professional profile. The border situation, through its importance within the Greater Region, has effects that are felt in a number of areas: employment, of course, but also training, transport, property, tourism, cross-border territorial development, and others.

* Belkacem R. and Pigeron-Piroth I. (Ed.), 2012, *Le travail frontalier au sein de la Grande Région Saar-Lor-Lux. Pratiques, enjeux et perspectives*, 502 p.

Order from: www.lcdpu.fr

EVENTS

MOT GA and conference

The MOT General Assembly will take place on 25 April 2013 in Strasbourg, at the invitation of the Strasbourg Urban Community. It will be preceded on 24 April by a conference on the topic: "2014-2020: cross-border cooperation serving citizens".

An event in the "French-German year – fiftieth anniversary of the Élysée Treaty" programme, the conference will be followed by a French-German cultural evening and the inauguration of the exhibition "De Gaulle-Adenauer: the builders of French-German friendship" organized by the Fondation Charles de Gaulle.

[Download the two-day programme.](#)



Seminars on cross-border operational arrangements

The MOT is organizing five information seminars between June and November 2013 on operational arrangements for cross-border projects on French borders within the framework of the French Europ'Act assistance programme. Each seminar will cover one of the French borders.

Looking for the new entrepreneur in the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion



More than 95% of companies in the European Union are small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), and they account for about two-thirds of jobs and GDP. The Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion, which encompasses the Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon regions in France and Catalonia, Aragon and the Balearic Islands in Spain, is developing two major European projects on its territory to boost employment and combat the economic crisis. Starting this year, the Euroregion is looking for new entrepreneurs who want to spend 1 to 6 months on its territory or in other European Union countries through the "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" programme. For this project, inspired by

the Erasmus programme for university students, the Euroregion is partnering the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon regions, the Chamber of Commerce of Barcelona and the Centre Balears Europa in Palma de Mallorca. These cross-border exchanges offer young future entrepreneurs the opportunity to receive training from experienced entrepreneurs managing small enterprises in the Euroregion. "It is obviously a great opportunity for an entrepreneur to have a pragmatic approach and to learn on the job with more experienced entrepreneurs", points out Antònia Sabartés, secretary-general of the Euroregion in Barcelona. In addition, since November

2010 the Creamed project has been networking nearly 100 business incubators and more than 1400 enterprises in the four regions. The Euroregion is targeting the incubators because the survival rate of the hosted and guided enterprises is much higher, at 70% to 80%, than the average of less than 50%. The project has ERDF co-funding and a budget of more than €1.4m for practical actions such as training for incubator directors and project managers and short internships. One of the highlights of this project will be the Biz Euroregio business convention on 16 and 17 April 2013 in Toulouse. www.euroregio.eu

Agglomération Sud Pays Basque: outlining a cross-border strategy



The river Bidassoa separating France and Spain

An innovative approach was implemented in the Agglomération Sud Pays Basque (south Basque country conurbation) on 8 February, at an

internal seminar bringing together elected representatives and technicians of the conurbation to outline a 2020 cross-border strategy. The territory consists of twelve municipalities, seven of which are on the border with Spain (from Hendaye to Ainhoa), and covers 270 square kilometres with more than 64,000 inhabitants.

The work took the form of a collective brainstorming, aiming to define and prioritize the cross-border projects for the territory, with three objectives: improve cross-border

governance, define cross-border work priorities, and get to know the participants better. 55 projects were identified and analyzed according to four strategic topics: the environment, spatial planning, economic development, and the Basque language.

The need for linkage with the other cross-border structures was stressed.

The MOT participated in this event, as a moderator and providing technical expertise.

[Download the proceedings of this seminar.](#)

The ECGs come into effect

On 1 March 2013, Protocol no. 3 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (the Madrid Outline Convention) concerning Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (ECG) entered into force in Germany and in Switzerland (on 1 May in France). "This protocol is an important step for local authorities, who can more easily develop cross-border cooperation bodies", declared Herwig Van Staa, president of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The protocol will facilitate cooperation of territorial communities or authorities belonging to different states and the establishment of cross-border cooperation organizations, within the area encompassed by the States of the Council of Europe. Source: Council of Europe

[Consult Protocol no. 3.](#)

Annual meeting of the EGTC Platform

Organized by the Committee of the Regions, the third annual meeting of the EGTC Platform, in which the MOT participated, was held in Brussels on 25 February 2013. This year the discussions focused on assessment of the inter-institutional work related to the revision of the EGTC regulation and the inclusion of issues related to EGTCs in other EU policies, for example transport and enterprises.

The EGTC regulation revision process is currently at the stage of co-decision between the European Parliament and the Council.

Frank Maughan, for the Irish Presidency of the Council, stated that the EGTC regulation is an integral part of the 2014-2020 legislative package and is a priority for the Irish presidency. On 20 February, a compromise was reached by the Council on the EGTC regulation, which will enable negotiations with the parliament to start soon. The Council, aware of the need to approve this new regulation rapidly, wants to promote the following points in particular: extension of partnership in EGTCs to members from third countries, consistency of the documents governing EGTCs

(convention and statutes) with the laws of the Member States and the EU, better determination of the applicable law, and easier amendment of EGTC partnerships.

The EGTC, which provides a legal framework for the political governance of territorial cooperation and which has been very useful in strategic terms for defining and implementing policies and projects, must now be used to its full potential. Expanding on this, EGTC Platform coordinator Herwig Van Staa reaffirmed that the utilization of the EGTC must go beyond the cohesion policy and that it must be placed at the service of the EU 2020 strategy.

Focusing on transport and enterprises, two strategic priorities

of the EU, and making the link with the European initiatives on these priorities that are given support at this level (RTE-T, DG Enterprise and Industry support for entrepreneurs, innovation, access to finance and to markets, etc.), while highlighting examples of EGTCs in the two areas, the discussions showed the pertinence of developing links between these strategies and topical issues (including the interconnection of border regions) by means of the EGTC, which has already demonstrated its effectiveness and potential as an instrument.

<http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc>



Cohesion policy 2014-2020: preparation of the Partnership Agreement

As the current European programming period draws to a close, the 2014-2020 framework is in preparation, at both the local and the national level. To this end, a national consultation¹, conducted in parallel with the definition of the operational programmes, was launched in December to provide input for the Partnership Agreement that will define the application of the European funds in France for the 2014-2020

period. On the basis of written submissions² and national and regional analyses conducted in 2012, a series of sixteen topic-based and territorial seminars between mid-March and mid-April 2013 has been organized to provide input for the strategy of the Partnership Agreement. More than 350 organizations (local authorities, central and decentralized government

departments, socioeconomic institutions and civil society) form the national partnership involved in the preparation of the Agreement. The MOT is a member of this partnership, in the "Civil society and economic forces" college, and is taking part in the consultation seminars to argue for the specific aspects and the interests of cross-border matters.

¹ www.partenariat20142020.fr

² The MOT submission.

Opinion of the Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions is preparing an opinion on "Frontier workers: Assessment of the situation after twenty years of the Internal Market: Problems and Perspectives". A consultation was organized in Brussels on 11 March on this draft opinion, for which the rapporteur is Karl-Heinz Lambertz, member of the Committee of the Regions, minister-president of the German-speaking Community of Belgium and president of the AEBR. [Further information](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Should borders be abolished?

Le Monde diplomatique, "Manière de voir" no. 128, April-May 2013

"Physical, cultural or symbolic, borders continue to fragment societies. They divide peoples and cultures at the same time as they bring them together and protect them; wars are fought over them, yet they form areas for exchanges and encounters. Threatening and protective, they crystallize 'two ways to lose oneself'."

Cohesion policy 2014-2020: government and local institutions are looking for the right cursor

Euractiv, 12 March

"The responses from local authorities to the DATAR consultation on the use of the structural funds reveal needs 'forgotten' by Brussels: broadband and public transport infrastructure and public services."

Towards cross-border access to healthcare

DNA, 15 March

"Yesterday the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict unanimously adopted a resolution in favour of the introduction of an 'organized area of access to cross-border healthcare'. The first step will be to make it easier to access follow-up care in cancer."

New Franco-Belgian agreement on fighting cross-border crime

L'Alsace, 19 March

"Yesterday in Tournai, Belgium, the French and Belgian interior ministers, Manuel Valls and Joëlle Milquet, signed a new agreement aiming to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in fighting cross-border crime."

Building a common identity

DNA, 15 March

"Meeting yesterday in Colmar, the senior representatives of the Upper Rhine Trinational Metropolitan Region decided to intensify the dialogue with the citizens. 'We want to intensify the cross-border citizen dialogue, because nothing can be forged without the people.' [...], Clemens Nagel, spokesperson for the Civil Society pillar of the Metropolitan Region..."

Combined approaches to energy performance

Le Moniteur, 15 March

"Three approaches to building energy performance are converging on 21 March in Colmar. Organizer of the colloquium and offshoot of the Upper Rhine conference, Trion will present its market survey on energy-saving renovations in the German, French and Swiss components..."

Greater Geneva is recruiting for its Conurbation Forum

Urbapress, 20 March

"On 15 March, the Greater Geneva cross-border conurbation (population 915,000) issued the call for candidates to form, within three months, the Conurbation Forum for civil society discussion and dialogue."

To stop the border 'stopping' the trains

Nice Matin, 12 March

"The Region, Liguria and Monaco are working under the auspices of Europe on a joint project to improve the service between France and Italy. Practical measures are already in effect."

Oyapock: resident cards 'coming soon'

France-Guyane, 13 March

"The French-Brazilian cross-border cooperation commission has been meeting since yesterday in Cayenne. The talks have covered topics including illegal fishing, the Oyapock bridge and the resident card. [...] The status of border residents has made substantial progress. The inhabitants of Saint-Georges and Oiapoque will soon have a card allowing them to cross freely [...] to the other side of the river."

The 'Frontières' festival in Thionville

From 6 to 12 April the "Frontières" festival takes place in Thionville, at the crossroads of Luxembourg, Germany and Belgium. Launched in 2009, this cross-disciplinary event seizes the topic of borders and invites sociologists, historians, linguists and philosophers, but also artists and writers, to come and speak of the walls that are falling and those that endure...

"The border is grasped in all its ambivalence: territorial discontinuity to mark two political entities, it can also become an area of passage and a place for meeting the other, recognized in its dissimilarities and its similarities, in its singularity." Around a programme intended to be rich in debates, round-tables, border cafés, but also cultural events, the third edition of the festival will focus on the meeting of languages, a topic approached as a voyage that starts from the terrain and raises the question: "If there is no human thought without language, what happens when several languages rub up against each other and meet?"

<http://festivalfrontieres.fr>

FESTIVAL FRONTIÈRES
3^{ème} ÉDITION

D'UNE LANGUE À L'AUTRE

À THIONVILLE
DU 6 AU 12 AVRIL 2013

EXPOSITIONS
CAFÉS FRONTIÈRES
CINÉMA
LITTÉRATURE
MUSIQUE
DANSE
ATELIERS
THÉÂTRE



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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page 3: Committee of the Regions

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